5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

nation. The men wore a shirt, breech-clout, leggings which reached to the thighs, and moccasins. In winter both men and women wore a robe of tanned buffalo skin, and sometimes of beaver. In summer a lighter robe was worn, made of cowskin or buckskin, from which the hair had been removed. Both sexes wore belts, which supported and confined the clothing, and to which were attached knife-sheaths and other useful articles.

Necklaces and ear-rings were worn by all, and were made of shells, bone, wood, and the teeth and claws of animals. Elk tushes were highly prized, and were used for ornamenting women's dresses. A gown profusely decorated with them was worth two good horses. Eagle feathers were used by the men to make head-dresses and to ornament shields and also weapons. Small bunches of owl or grouse feathers were sometimes tied to the scalp locks. It is doubtful if the women ever took particular care of their hair. The men, however, spent a great deal of time brushing, braiding, and ornamenting their scalp locks. Their hair was usually worn in two braids, one on each side of the head. Less frequently, four braids were made, one behind and in front of each ear. Sometimes, the hair of the forehead was cut off square, and brushed straight up; and not infrequently it was made into a huge topknot and wound with otter fur. Often a slender lock, wound with brass wire or braided, hung down from one side of the forehead over the face.

As a rule, the men are tall, straight, and well formed. Their features are regular, the eyes being large and well set, and the nose generally moderately large, straight, and thin. Their chests are splendidly developed. The women are quite tall for their sex, but, as a rule, not so good-looking as the men. Their hands are large, coarse, and knotted by hard labor; and they early become wrinkled and careworn. They generally have splendid constitutions. I have known them to resume work a day after childbirth; and once, when

147 travelling, I knew a woman to halt, give birth to a child, and
[846] catch up with the camp inside of four hours.

As a rule, children are hardy and vigorous. They are
855 allowed to do about as they please from the time they are
147 able to walk. I have often seen them playing in winter in the snow, and spinning tops on the ice, barefooted and half-naked. Under such conditions, those which have feeble constitutions soon die. Only the hardiest reach maturity and old age.

342 It is said that very long ago the people made houses of
174 mud, sticks, and stones. It is not known what was their size or shape, and no traces of them are known to have been found. For a very long time, the lodge seems to have been their only dwelling. In ancient times, before they had knives of metal, stones were used to hold down the edges of the lodge, to keep it from being blown away. These varied in size from six inches to a foot or more in diameter.
[172] Everywhere on the prairie, one may now see circles of these stones, and, within these circles, the smaller ones, which surrounded the fireplace. Some of them have lain so long that only the tops now project above the turf, and undoubtedly many of them are buried out of sight.

342 Lodges were always made of tanned cowskin, nicely cut
[237] and sewn together, so as to form an almost perfect cone. At the top were two large flaps, called ears, which were kept extended or closed, according to the direction and strength of the wind, to create a draft and keep the lodge free from smoke. The lodge covering was supported by light, straight pine or spruce poles, about eighteen of which were required. Twelve cowskins made a lodge about fourteen feet in diameter at the base, and ten feet high. I have heard of a modern one which contained forty skins. It was over thirty feet in diameter, and was so heavy that the skins were sewn in two pieces which buttoned together.

An average-sized dwelling of this kind contained eighteen

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

Blackfoot camps. "When ten or twelve tents were together, we were sure to see six or seven women mutilated in this manner."[7] However, this severe punishment for infidelity was discontinued by the middle 1870's.[8]

Stormy as their marital lives sometimes were, Blackfoot Indians were fond and indulgent parents. Large families were common. Some men claimed to have fathered more than a score of children by their several wives. The pregnant woman wore a broad, adjustable rawhide belt as her time approached. It supported and protected her when she rode horseback or engaged in active work. Sometimes an expectant mother's labor pains came while she was riding with a moving camp. She dropped out of the line of march and two or three hours later returned to the caravan with her newborn babe in her arms. Usually, however, the birth took place in a tipi. An elderly woman, experienced in midwifery, gave the mother a decoction of roots to drink to ease her pains and facilitate delivery. While the mother grasped one of the lodge poles and an assistant held her around the waist the midwife attended to the delivery, then laced the mother in her rawhide belt. Sometimes the mother resumed her household chores the next day.

A portion of the baby's navel cord was cut, dried, and preserved in a beaded buckskin case as the child's primitive health insurance. The cases for boys' navel cords were in the form of snakes; girls' were lizard-shaped. The Blackfeet believed that snakes and lizards were never sick and lived long lives. The child was bathed and wrapped in soft skin. Moss or a soft punk served in lieu of diapers.

A few days after the birth the father called upon some distinguished member of his band to name the child. The name was carefully chosen because it was believed to have an important influence on the child's life. Sometimes it was the name of a respected ancestor; at other times it commemorated a brave or generous act of the bestower or of the child's father. Lazy

[7] *Travels*, II, 110, 117, 136.
[8] Bradley, "Manuscript," *MHSC*, Vol. IX, 271.

778 783 824 paraphernalia. It was chewed in ceremonies involving prolonged fasting as a means of extended endurance. Sweet grass was used generally by everyone as incense with daily prayers.

846 824 783 An occasion for the use of sweet grass---one that was somewhat outside the bundle system but nevertheless of great importance---was the return of a woman with her newborn child. Traditionally, a woman would remain apart from her husband for about thirty-four days after giving birth. Just [851] before returning home she would be assisted by a woman so old she could have no more children. A complete set of new clothes was laid out for the mother. While this was being done the mother bathed in water scented with sweet grass. A smudge was prepared, and when the mother had finished bathing she covered herself with a robe and stood over the incense from the smudge. Then her new clothes were held to the smudge four times before she was [302] allowed to put them on. Her face, arms, and feet were ochred red. She was now considered to be completely cleansed (from the bad blood of the birth). The old woman who assisted her took her prepartum clothing and threw it in the river, where it floated away or sank out of sight. (Women who could not afford a new set of clothes kept their old ones and were purified in [842] them.) The mother then returned home as if she were newly married. (It was at this time that a woman would begin the practice of birth control; for this purpose a mixture of plants having abortifacient or contraceptive properties was contained in a religious bundle of special design.)

824 Braids of sweet grass were tied vertically around the base of the Horn Society staffs. Braids were also strung on the inside of headbands of the Motokiks headdresses.

[825] One informant told us that the Owl and the Loon in the medicine pipes owned the sweet grass and that the bear owned the juniper; but we have not

844 I had been in a hospital they might have operated and saved
845 it. There was no Indian doctor right there to help. They have
a lot of good herbs and medicines. Too bad modern doctors
759 don't learn them and use them. If they did it would be very
good."

● 846 By my grandmothers' ways, when a baby is born it is bundled up right away in old rags. The girl's mother would save old rags for her daughter beforehand. Of course, they were cleaned rags. The baby would be dressed like this for the first thirty days, and the mother, too. She would continue to wear the clothes she used during her pregnancy. She usually stayed with her own mother during this time, away from her husband. No sick person could stay around the home where she was taken care of. She didn't do any heavy work during those thirty days.

846 During this period of confinement the new mother was
783 bathed and given a cleansing ceremony every four days. Her mother would wash her and then cover her up with a blanket. She was made to sit by the altar, where incense was made. The incense went up under her blanket and purified her body. My grandmother, AnadaAki, still went through all this in her time.

846 To bring the mother's body back to shape, in addition to massages, she was made to wear a "belt" or girdle of rawhide. This was wide enough to cover her abdomen, and tied firmly. She did not use pins on any of the rag clothing. She tied her baby's rag bundle together with buckskin cords. This was kind of a trial period, to make sure everybody would survive
[165] the new birth. In those days children often died in their first days, and it was not unusual for mothers to die from childbirth, too.

At the end of the thirty days they would move camp, the mother would be cleansed once more, and they would get dressed in their new clothes. Usually the child got a new cradleboard.

551 given the name Low Horn, in honor of his great-grandfather, who was a leader in the tribe. The Low Horn that he was named after lived so long ago that he is mentioned in our legends.

"My daughter carries the name of her great-grandmother, SikskiAki, which means Black-Faced Woman. This is an honor that was bestowed on her by one of that great-grandmother's sons, who was an old man when my daughter was born. He is gone now, but the memory of his mother lives on through her name.

"While men most often carry an inherited name, women [559] were usually named for famous war deeds. Old warriors and chiefs were asked to give these names to little girls in order to bless them with the good luck and success of the war trails. Common names are Stabbed-in-the-Water Woman, Shot-Close Woman, and Medicine-Capture Woman. One thing we all have in common is that our names end with *Woman*. That's strange, since not so many men's names end with *Man*."

846 Our late grandfather, Willie Scraping White, was put 782 through a powerful ceremony when he was first born, in 852 1877. His mother had hard luck with children. All up to him had been born dead or died shortly after birth. His parents were desperate to have him live, so they went to an old lady named Holy Otter Woman, who was a holy woman noted for spiritual powers. The old lady prayed for him, then chopped off part of his little finger and gave it to Sun as an offering. This was considered a most powerful form of sacrifice in the ways of my grandmothers. Many of them did likewise in times of need.

The old lady also took our grandfather, wrapped him up in blankets, and tied him up in a tree as if he were dead. His mother stood underneath and mourned for him. The old lady said that she would never have to do that again. She was right, since our grandfather lived to be ninety-seven.

28: Goldfrank E-4,5 (1939) 1967 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

cepting for the sons of the rich—and they were a decided minority—skill in hunting and warfare and courage in the face of danger were the musts for survival. In a word, self-reliance was the aim and basis of training.

And self-reliance was as necessary inside the home as outside it. Not that the Blood lacked affection for their offsprings, or a desire to support them. Many observers have commented most positively on both these traits. But the dependence on the hunt and war for food and gain, the frequent movings from place to place, made the rearing of children a difficult matter. Many stories are told of newborn infants "thrown away," left to die in the bushes, either because they could not be cared for on the march, or because raiders might hear their cries and thus be led to the camping ground, or because a mother had died in childbirth (the lot of the orphan, and even the half-orphan, was, and still is, far from enviable).

It was also considered desirable to limit the number of children. Two years was the standard interval, but the longer the time between siblings, the more parents demonstrated their love for the child previously born. Moreover, abortion carried no stigma. Magic help for this purpose could be easily secured from an authorized female practitioner, and as a special favor, a stop could be put to childbearing altogether. Revealingly, barrenness is never given as a cause for divorce in this competitive society where women are highly prized as property and sex objects, and where marriage is notoriously unstable.

The hunt and war often and for extended periods took the Blood father away from home. And these absences, however necessary, were a continual threat to a child's security. For whether justified or not, and frequently he was justified, a husband was quick to suspect that "the worst" had happened while he was gone.[21] A child often heard his mother accused of adultery, often saw her beaten, and not infrequently deserted. Whatever the ultimate solution of familial disagreement, the child invariably was the sufferer. Even if his parents remained together, he often sought refuge with a nearby relative to avoid further scenes of violence. If they separated and he went with his mother, as he usually did if he was still "young," his sense of belonging might be rudely disturbed again. For often when his mother remarried, she left him with

[21] Among the Blood jealousy was and is obsessional. Many a husband approaching his end threatened to kill his wife, for only if she accompanied him on his final journey would he be sure that he alone would possess her in the next world. The only Blood confined to an insane asylum, whose case was not complicated by physical causes, attempted to murder his wife because he believed she was having intercourse with a ghost.

33: Bradley G-3 (1871-1877) 1923
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

602 face until they had passed by. The same rule of etiquette applied to parents who were *mah-oh-tahn*, that is, who were related by the marriage of their children. Thus the parents of the husband were mah-oh-tahn to the parents of his wife, and the reverse. This is a happy word for which we have no equivalent in English and a chance is thus presented still further to enrich our language.

DIVORCE

586 Divorce was common and rested only upon mutual agreement. The wife, if dissatisfied, might return at will to her father's lodge, or the husband might for a similar reason send her back. The parents also or the brother-in-law might reclaim their daughter and the husband had [626] no redress. This was frequently done temporarily as a check to brutal treatment or an incentive to a lazy husband to better provide for his wife. This right ceased after the wife had borne children. In all the above cases of separation the husband was entitled to the return gifts [626] made before the marriage. The ease with which a wife might leave her husband greatly abridged his power over her and constrained good treatment.

CHILD-BIRTH

844 The Blackfeet women were very easy of parturition, a week sufficing in ordinary cases to restore them to perfect [846] health. Indeed, very frequently they would occupy themselves with their customary duties the following day and not a few instances are mentioned where they have been overtaken by the pains of child-birth on the march, and, after a couple of hours' delay, would resume their places [145] in the cavalcade. It is unquestionable, however, that such early resumption of toil (rendered necessary by their nomadic life) brings on age prematurely and has much to do with the haggard, miserable appearance of most Indian women who have passed the meridian of life.

CHILDHOOD

854 Soon after birth the infant was laid upon its back upon [824] a piece of bark of suitable length, or rolled firmly in un- [235] dressed skin, in which condition it passed the first year of its life.

53: Uhlenbeck L-5 (1910-1911) 1912 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Piegan
Montana

auaists, omá níuau ki manikâ´piks áistunnoyii mánistsistomaiks. Apatóχtak áuaniu, iχ´tsáuæskunatapsiau manikâ´piks, istotaitsípisau mánistsistomaiks.

for them [near their fathers' lodges]. When they had given birth to a child, they were safe after nine days. The reason why the women did not give birth to a child in their [own] lodges, [was that] the man and the young men were afraid of those that had just given birth to a child. The ancient people used to say, [that] the young men were not strong [would have no endurance], if they entered in a place [where there were] women that had just given birth to a child.

[Cf. Wissler slbi 28.]

Marriage.

Á´kai-Pekàniua matsoápanikâpiks, ákoχkèmisau, mátauaitakìuaiks. Omí nínai, otáinkûsimmòki, otánnyai ákàksinaiin. A´moia matsoápii otsináni ákoχkænoχkotsìu otánni. Ponokâ´mitaiks áχsiks ákoχpoχkanauaχkiskuyiuaie. Kanáitapiua ákstæmsksinìm, áiaua áχkiskumoau. Ki áksksinoau, otsitsoápsi. Ki omí maáχsi ákatsksinoàin, otsínaiis. Ki omá manikâ´piu otákoχkspummok únni. Nitúyi ákanistaχsii ponokâ´mitaiks ki ámoia pínpì otákomatskaχtaksists. Nitúyi kanáitapiua ákanistsinoyìu, omí manikâ´pi otomátskaχtaksists. Omá saχkínau omí otoχkéman uyínnaiks nitúyi ákatanistoχkotsiu. I´soχtsik omí otoχkéman mátsùpsis, mátakstuyi-

The fine young men of the ancient Peigans, when they were to marry, never asked for a wife. The daughter of the chief, that had to have him for son-in-law, would be dressed up. He would give all the finery, that belonged to him, to his daughter. He would send all good horses with her. Everybody would know, [that] a certain person had a wife sent to him. And he would be known, that he was a fine man. And his father-in-law would also be known, that he was a chief. And the young man would be helped by his father [to give presents to the chief who was to be his father-in-law]. The horses and the other things, that he [the future